



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**

Buffalo District

.....**News Notes**

A news conference was held on Wednesday, March 6, 2002 at the Buffalo District office, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Corps management and staff updated the media on the status of hazardous waste cleanup projects in western New York. A news release announcing the news conference was sent to 19 media sources in western New York several days prior.

Prepared remarks, included below, discuss the cleanup projects under the Corps' management, status of the fiscal year 2002 budget for the Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program (FUSRAP), and information pertinent to cleanup activities at individual sites. Questions were taken from reporters afterwards.

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LTC Glen R. DeWillie, Commander Buffalo District, US Army Corps of Engineers began with the following prepared remarks:

“Good morning. I want to welcome you all to the Buffalo District today and thank you for your interest in two of our major environmental programs: FUSRAP (Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program) and DERP FUDS, the Defense Environmental Restoration Program, Formerly Used Defense Sites.

I'd like to open today with a short set of prepared remarks about the Corps' role in FUSRAP and DERP FUDS, address our active involvement with the public, and highlight our accomplishments within these two programs to date. I'll then hand off to Jim Karsten who will discuss some detailed issues involving the FUSRAP program and we'll conclude with a brief set of remarks from our Lake Ontario Ordnance Works Project Manager, Mary Kay Foley. We'll take any questions you have after all three of us have presented.

The FUSRAP and DERP FUDS programs both represent our country's legacy that is specifically tied to our Department of Defense. The freedom we enjoy as Americans today comes from the price paid by the many soldiers and workers involved in the defense industry at large, dating back to the early part of the last century for this country.

For western NY in particular, some of this defense department legacy still remains in the form of contaminated sites, once used for atomic research, or in the production of munitions. The good news is that our nation's leaders have stepped forward to accept accountability for this legacy and have done something to change it – to make the

business properties, lands and residences here in western NY and throughout our nation safe for this generation and for generations to come.

To respond to this legacy requires two actions, both involving our Congress: authorization and appropriation. In 1997, the Congress authorized the Corps of Engineers to perform investigations and remedial actions for sites brought into the FUSRAP program. They appropriated 140 million dollars annually to address over 40 sites throughout the US used during the Manhattan Project and other related research work under the Atomic Energy Commission. In 1986, the Congress also authorized the Corps to investigate and remediate former defense sites throughout the western NY area and the US. The Congress has appropriated 250 million dollars annually to address this issue.

The Congress relies on the Corps' highly capable, responsive, workforce to carry out this complex investigation and remediation mission and closely monitors our actions to ensure those sites with the highest potential risks are prioritized. Congressman LaFalce is a strong advocate for the FUSRAP and DERP-FUDS programs. He has been personally involved in the original authorization and appropriation for FUSRAP and continues to support FUSRAP and DERP FUDS projects alike in western NY.

The Corps seeks first to understand and actively listen to the public. To that end, we have captured and addressed public issues such as the recent concern over possible radioactive contamination at the Lewiston-Porter school campus. Our prompt investigation confirmed that background radiation levels on the property posed no threat to personnel at the school.

Of the 140 million dollar annual FUSRAP program, nearly one third of the nationally available dollars have been programmed and spent here in western NY for investigation and remediation. We have safely moved over 310,000 tons of contaminated material to disposal areas out of state, recording no lost time accidents in over 1900 man-days of remediation. We continue to monitor neighboring properties and workers on our sites to ensure protection of human health and the environment.

We have made solid forward progress in the DERP FUDS area as well, serving as the governmental co-chair to the environmental restoration advisory board on the Lake Ontario Ordnance Works site. The Restoration Advisory Board is the cornerstone for involving stakeholders in the cleanup process and was the vehicle that allowed us to hear the public's concerns about the Lew Port school and respond. We also have a website where we post fact sheets and information to keep the public informed, and routinely conduct public information sessions to provide periodic site updates and solicit valuable feedback. We have completed significant cleanup of residues left from the processing of explosives such as TNT at this site and continue to assess risks to determine a prioritized plan for remedial action at this site.

I'd like to turn this over to Jim Karsten, the FUSRAP program manager for the district to discuss our progress with the FUSRAP sites.

We have additional information packages available if you did not pick one up already (please see Tara).

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James W. Karsten, FUSRAP Program Manager spoke next:

“Thank you LTC DeWillie.

I’m Jim Karsten the Buffalo District Program Manager for FUSRAP.

I will provide you some historical background, information on our successes to date, and what we expect to accomplish in the future.

The FUSRAP Program was established to conduct cleanup of residual radioactive materials left behind from the Nation’s programs involving development of the atomic bomb and nuclear energy. Note that in most cases cleanup was accomplished at these sites years ago under the standards that were in place at that time. As science has learned more about the health effects of radioactivity standards have become stricter and additional cleanups are being accomplished where contamination exceeds current guidelines.

Congress transferred FUSRAP from the Department of Energy to the Corps of Engineers in October 1997. It also directed the Corps of Engineers to follow the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) in its conduct of the Program.

Buffalo District was originally assigned eight FUSRAP sites and six of them are right here in Western NY.

The six sites are:

- Ashland 1, Ashland 2, Seaway (which are located adjacent to one another in the Town of Tonawanda)
- Bliss & Laughlin in the city of Buffalo
- Linde (Praxair) in the Town of Tonawanda, and
- Niagara Falls Storage near Lewiston

In addition to these original six sites Buffalo District was tasked to assess the Guterl Steel Site in Lockport.

Some of the good news for Western NY is that two of these sites – Ashland 2 and Bliss & Laughlin – have been remediated and approved by the NY State Department of Environmental Conservation! Two more sites – Ashland 1 and Linde are being remediated at this time.

The execution of the National FUSRAP Program requires a substantial amount of funding and Congress, with strong support by local Congressman John LaFalce, has provided approximately \$140 million annually. Of those funds an average of about \$40 million yearly has been provided to Buffalo District for progressing its assigned sites.

LTC DeWillie mentioned that approximately \$154 million has been expended at the six Western NY sites from October 1997 through February 2002. \$23 million was spent to complete the Ashland 2 cleanup and Bliss & Laughlin ran about \$1.4 million. Costs to date for Ashland 1 and Linde are \$58 million and \$54 million, respectively. The Corps has also applied its engineering expertise to the tasks at hand and has achieved savings of over \$20 million using its innovation of precise excavation techniques, and competing transportation and disposal contracts.

An estimate of remaining FUSRAP work for the Western NY sites is about \$ 325 million, but that number may vary considerably based upon the need for and extent of remediation work required.

These dollars have been used to:

- perform investigations;
- process and analyze the data;
- perform risk assessments;
- develop cleanup alternatives;
- prepare the decision-making reports to define the remediation work;
- develop work and health & safety plans; and
- conduct the remediation activities.

Of the 310,000 plus tons of contaminated materials removed from Western NY over 52,000 tons were taken from Ashland 2, and Ashland 1 and Linde totals to date are 167,000 and 94,000 tons, respectively. After removal these materials have been shipped without incident in sealed containers to an out-of-state facility for recycling and disposal.

The Corps and its contractors have placed special emphasis on safety – both that of the site workers and the people that live in neighborhoods around the sites. The teams' collective safety record to date is superlative with 0 lost time accidents in over 1900 man-days of remediation work! When you realize that these sites have been active year round – even during our Buffalo winters – and using a lot of heavy equipment – this is truly remarkable! During remediation activities the air and groundwater surrounding the sites are also closely monitored and to ensure protection of human health and the environment.

Note that the District maintains detailed Administrative Records at local libraries and also provides access to information through periodic information meetings, a web site and a toll-free phone number. We have handy reference cards that are available at our public information meetings.

The Corps has developed successful partnering relationships with local, state and federal regulatory agencies and has received positive feedback from the general public on our public information efforts. We have held 12 meetings with the public over the past year to listen to their concerns and keep them updated on our progress. We have also worked closely with property owners so that they can maintain their operations with as little interruption as possible.

The four plus years Buffalo District has been working on FUSRAP have been both challenging and rewarding. The Corps team looks forward to following this Program through to its estimated completion date of 2012 and remediating the residual radioactive materials in Western NY ensuring all sites are safe and comply with regulated future use scenarios.

This concludes my remarks on FUSRAP and I'll turn the podium over to Mary Kay Foley."

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Mary Kay Foley, Project Manager, Lake Ontario Ordnance Works Site gave these concluding remarks:

"Good morning my name is Mary Kay Foley and I am the project manager for the Lake Ontario Ordnance Works Site (LOOW).

I would like to describe the DERP FUDS program and give an overview of the LOOW site history, ongoing projects, and future plans for the site.

The DERP-FUDS acronym stands for "Defense Environmental Restoration Plan for Formerly Used Defense Sites. The Defense department created this program to correct environmental damage caused by its activities. The cleanup of formerly used defense sites is part of this program. The FUDS sites are properties that the Department of Defense once owned or used, but no longer controls. These properties can range from privately owned farms to National Parks, residential areas, school, colleges, and industrial areas.

The Goals of FUDS cleanup are:

- Identification, investigation and cleanup of contamination from Department of Defense related Hazardous substances
- Detection and disposal of unexploded ordnance and explosive waste
- Demolition and removal of unsafe buildings, and structures located on formerly owned Defense properties that are currently owned by a state or municipality.

The LOOW project web site contains a fact sheet describing the DERP-FUDS program and also contains a link to the USACE headquarters FUDS web page with additional program information.

The former LOOW originally encompassed 7,500 acres in the towns of Lewiston and Porter in Niagara County New York. Of this area only 2,500 acres were actively used by the DoD, the rest was reserved as a buffer area. During WWII the army manufactured TNT at the facility, the site was decommissioned in 1943 due to overproduction at other plants.

The USACE has several activities currently ongoing at the Former LOOW site. These activities include a remedial investigation, and aerial photo survey, a risk assessment, and we are preparing contracts for several cleanups at the site. The USACE has already completed several cleanups including the removal of asbestos and a cleanup of a TNT waste line on site.

The USACE has established an Administrative record for this site which contains all the historical information on the site and past work done by USACE. This record is available for public viewing at the Lewiston public library, the Youngstown Free Library, and at the USACE Buffalo District office. The Buffalo district also maintains an Internet site for this project that can be found at www.lrb.usace.army.mil/derpfuds/loow/index.htm."

To obtain more information on FUSRAP or DERP-FUDS, please contact:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Public Affairs Office
1776 Niagara Street
Buffalo, NY 14207-3199
(716) 879-4124

You may also call the district toll-free telephone number: 1-800-833-6390

The USACE-Buffalo District Web page address is: <http://www.lrb.usace.army.mil>